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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the problems involved in educating black children, particularly black migrant children. The characteristics of black families that influence their children's use of language and classroom behaviors are described. Interaction between black students and teachers and the role that non verbal communication plays in this relationship are considered. A number of research studies are reviewed that have focused on language use and inconsistencies between white teachers' expectations and black children's culturally determined communication styles. The paper also points out the health and nutritional problems that affect migrant children's learning abilities. Several recommendations regarding teaching techniques, testing, government action, and health services are offered. (APM)

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THE BLACK MIGRANT CHILD AND PUBLIC POLICY

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BLACK MIGRANT CHILDREN AND PUBLIC POLICY

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It is important to discuss the Black migrant worker in the context of the agricultural history of Black people in America. It is a history of exploitation that produced slaves, sharecroppers and migrants.

The migrant movement started in the South after the Civil War. The newly freed slaves tested their freedom by wandering to the West and by establishing themselves as industrial workers in the North. Meanwhile, new forms of slavery were devised by planation owners who were too impoverished to pay the freedmen who remained who were desperately needed to work the land. For the descendants of slaves, migrancy became a way of life.

> Every May found them in ramshackle buses headed for the cabbage, tomato and apple harvest along the Eastern Seaboard, and every October saw them back in Florida shacks picking oranges and grapefruit. In recent years they have been joined in their harvest and farm related activities by Indians from Canada, offshore workers, Puerto Ricans, Chicanos and poor whites. These constitute what is known as the Eastern Stream.
>
> Who are they? They are the people whose families depend on for supporting them physically, financially and morally. They are the 'breath of life' for their families know no other lifestyle than being migratory workers. They are the 'children of the sun'. (Mattera and Steel, 1974)

Migrant children are classified in terms of interstate, intrastate and former migrant children. A migrant child is the child of a migratory agricultural worker or a migratory fisherman. S/he is a child who has moved with his family from one school district to another during the 12 months immediately preceding his identification in order that a parent or other member of his immediate family might secure employment in producing agricultural or fishery products.[1]

As we consider the policy implications of the dilemma of the Black migrant child, it is important to place this discussion in the perspective of the issues being raised that will give definition to the education of all Black children in America. From that common framework we will then give attention to issues that are particularly salient to Black migrants.

For the past twenty years there has been an implicit assumption by social scientists and policy makers that the difficulties Black children have experienced in school are related to poverty and social class. Poor children

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1. California Master Plan for Migrant Education FY 1977 -78, California State Department of Education, 1977.

of diverse ethnic groups were labeled "culturally deprived," and "disadvantaged" and treated in a homogeneous fashion in compensatory educational programs.

In the late '70's a small group of Black social scientists (Boykin, 1978; Simmons, 1979; Hale, 1980a, 1980) have suggested that ethnicity may be as salient a factor in shaping the behavioral styles of Black children as social class. That is, there are aspects of the culture in which Black children grow and develop that shape the way they approach academic tasks and behave in traditional academic settings.

W.E.B. DuBois described the Black person in America as possessing two "warring souls". On one hand, Black people are products of their Afro-American heritage and culture. On the other hand, they are shaped by the demands of Euro-American culture.

There is a kind of "soulfulness" that characterizes Black culture. Black people transform every cultural mode they interact with: language, music, art, dance, problem solving, sports, writing or any other area of human expression. The task of this paper is to describe aspects of this "soulfulness" that emerges through the Black family and to indicate its relationship to the adjustments that confront Black children in Academic settings. As Wade Boykin has suggested:

> . . . perhaps we can facilitate the academic/task performance of the Black child if we increase the "soulfulness" of the academic setting.

My present work involves conducting a micro-analysis of Black culture that can yield those aspects of the Afro-American ethos that should be considered in the design of learning enviornments and the planning of learning experiences of Black children.

This discussion will focus upon characteristics of the Black family that influence child-rearing.

Characteristics of Black Families that Influence Childrearing

Afro-American culture seems to place a greater degree of emphasis upon affect than Anglo-American culture. The realms of feeling and affect and the cognitive processes arising from inter-personal relations may have important implications for Black people. Research suggests that Black people are a very emotional people. Some of these scholars (Dixon and Foster, 1971; Lester, 1969) have suggested that the emotion-charged, people-oriented quality of Black expression is a part of an African heritage.

Research (Young, 1970) has suggested that white children are more object-oriented than Black children and Black children are more people-oriented than whites. There is greater social breadth in the Black family. That is, there are more children in the household, and there is an extended network of kin and para-kin that is supportive of the nuclear family. So, whereas white children manipulate toys and objects and thereby discover properties and relationships, Black children explore their human enviornment. Instead of playing alone in a playpen with "tinker" toys, Black babies are passed lap to lap.

Virginia Young contrasts the highly personal interaction with the low object orientation found in Black families. She noticed that few object were given to babies. The only type observed were some plastic toys that may have been picked up in the supermarket while shopping. Also, when babies reached to grasp an object or feel a surface, they were often redirected to feeling the holder's face or engaged in "rubbing faces" as a substitute. This inhibition of exploration is possible because:

> There are always eyes on the baby and idle hands to take away forbidden objects and then distract the frustrated baby. The personal is thus often substituted for the impersonal.

This affective orientation may be a critical factor that is overlooked in traditional educational settings. This society's educational system is very object oriented. Classrooms are filled with educational hardware and technology-- books, listening stations, learning centers, televisions, programmed instruction, learning kits and so forth. There seems to be a higher degree of compatibility between the experience of white children at home and the expectations of the school. It also seens that some of the affective needs of Black children are not being met. The high degree of people orientation may account for the indifferentness with which some Black children regard books and devices. It may also explain why some teachers complain that Black children will not work independently and cling to the teacher. I observed a classroom in which there were children who would work only when older children assisted them individually. It may be that this is a cultural trait that may need to be acknowledged with the result being more human interaction in the learning process.

Another dimension of this affective orientation is the importance of the teacher-student interpersonal relationship. Rapport with the teacher in educational settings and rapport with the examiner in testing settings seems to be strongly related to academic performance for Black students and not

very critical for whites. Zigler and others (Zigler and Butterfield, 1968: Zigler, Abelson, and Seitz, 1973) found that when a good rapport was established between an examiner during a standardized testing session, the Black children exhibited significantly superior test performance than when it was not. Such a difference was not found in the white middle-class sample.

Piestrup (1973) has catalogued some of the factors which create good rapport in the teacher-Black student interaction. She demonstrated that when those factorswere present, they increased the reading proficiency of 1st grade Black pupils.

Related to the affective orientation is a proficiency in non-verbal communication.

It has been reported that there is a minimal amount of verbal exchange in lower-class families. Young observes that this is because of the abundance of communication in other forms. She observed Black people to look deeply into each other's eyes, not speaking, by seeming to communicate fully. She suggests that parents use this to impress a point on a child. It has been noted that Black people avoid meeting the eyes of whites and this has been interpreted as a gesture of non-equality. However, Young suggests that it may instead be a gesture of noncommunicativeness, in view of the extensive communication through looking into the eyes wihtin the Black group.

An educational implication of this difference in non-verbal communication is shown in a study conducted by Byers and Byers (1972). They analyzed films of a white teacher interacting with two white and two Black girls of nursery school age. One of the girls of each race was very active in trying to get the teacher's attention with different record of success. The white girl looked at the teacher 14 time, and was successful in catching the teacher's eye on 8 of these occasions. The Black girl tried the same thing 35 times, and was successful in 4 of these attempts. These differences could be interpreted as evidence of discrimination, but it could be the result of cultural differences in non-verbal communication. Analysis of the films showed that most of the Black girl's glances were at times when the teacher's attention was directed in such a way that she could not notice the attempt to get her attention through eye contact. The same was true in the affective area. The white girl seemed to sense when she could move next to the teacher, sit on her lap and so on, without dirupting the activity. The Black girl's

attempts were timed differently, suggesting that she and the teacher did not share the same set of expectations and understanding of the meaning of gestures.

These differences in non-verbal communication should be investigated further because it may have implications for the kinds of rewards and punishments Black children elicit from the enviornment.

Rosalie Cohen (1969) has identified two contrasting styles of learning. One is called the analytical style and the other is the relational style. The analytical style seems to be typical of middle-class whites and the relational style seems to be typical of Blacks. These styles refer to difference in the methods of selecting and classifying information, behaving in a learning situation and approaching learning tasks. (See Appendix for summary of styles.)

The school requires one specific approach to cognitive organization--analytic (Cohen 1969). Pupils who have not developed these skills and those who function with a different cognitive style will not only be poor achievers in school, but will become worse as they move to higher grade levels.

Not only does the school reward the development of analytic styles of possessing information, but its overall ideology and enviornment re-enforces behaviors associated with that style.

> Aspects of analytic style can be found in the requirements that the pupil learn to sit increasingly long periods of time, to concentrate alone on impersonal learning stimuli, and to observe and value organized time allotment schedules.

The differences between children who function with relational and cognitive styles is so great that a child whose cognitive organization is relational is unlikely to be rewarded socially with grades regardless of his native ability, the depth of his information or his background experience. In fact, he will probably be considered deviant and disruptive in the analytically oriented learning enviornment of the school.

Cohen suggests further that children develop their cognitive styles based upon the socializtion they receive in their family and friendship groups. She analyzes that children who participate in structured families with what she calls "formal" styles of group organization have been observed to function with analytical cognitive style. Those children who live in more fluid families which she called "share-function" primary groups, are more likely to utilize relational cognitive styles. Cohen is suggesting intellectual implications for a characteristic of Black families described by Robert Hill (1972). Hill suggests that adaptability of family roles is a strength of

Black families. The ability of family members to take on roles and responsibilities as they arise has permitted the Black family to perform its functions within numerous types of family forms.

Another characteristic of Black families that may affect the behavior of Black children in educational settings is an emphasis on willfulness/assertiveness/style. Black families value idiosyncractic behavior on the part of Black children. There is a strong emphasis upon personal expressiveness, spontaneity, and assertiveness. This emphasis upon individual uniqueness/distinctiveness could be characterized as "style". Style is very important in the Black community. It is not only what you do, but <u>how</u> you do. Thomas Kochman (1970) has described an important difference in personality development in the Black and white communities. Because the opportunity structure has been so limiting, Black people have obtained admiration from their peers for personal attributes rather than their status or office. One is admired for his verbal ability, personality, wit, strength, intelligence, speed and so forth. As Black people have often held jobs which offered less power and prestige, they have acquired prestige within the group through the development of personal attributes. There is a clear relationship between this characteristic and the relational learning style. Cohen siggests that they would thrive in an educational setting that promotes freedom vs. rules; variation vs. standardization; creativity vs. conformity; flexibility vs. rigid order; novelty vs. regularity; uniqueness vs. normality; and improvision vs. precision.

It is no surprise that Cohen feels that relational style users are the most creative in the arts.

Black children are exposed to a high degree of stimulation from the creative arts. They are surrounded with stimuli from: the visual arts such as-- posters, painting and graffitti; the audio arts such as-- phonographs, radios and tape players; the video arts such as-- television and films; and the fashion arts such as-- creative hairstyles, hats, scarves and a general orientation toward adornment of the body that grows out of the African heritage.

Another aspect of the creative arts are the performer styles that permeate the Black community. This expressiveness is seen in the behavior of Black preachers, athletes, singers, dancers and is cultivated in individuals throughout the Black community. The Last Poets summed it up by declaring that all Black people "are actors". It is difficult to be Black and boring.

Young Black children learn the significance of perfecting performer roles at an early age. Lee Rainwater discusses Black pre-school children's strategies for getting what they want.

> The children learn that they can gain attention by their ability to perform in expressive adult ways, by using the special Black language, by trying seriously to learn the current dances, by imitating hip and cool aspects of adult behavior. Young Black children learn from early childhood the expressive styles of their community.

Movement and Stimulus Change

Harry Morgan (1976) suggests that Black infants are superior in all aspects of development when the mothers have adequate prenatal care. He also points out that Black children are motorically precocious. They are more active and have more physical energy to expend than white children. Their physical precocity can be substantiated by the numbers of Black athletes who dominate the major sports in numbers that are far diproportionate to Black representation in the population.

Morgan maintains that the schools do not suppoet the natural energy level of Black children. He suggests that Black children need an active enviornment for successful learning. He states that this is particularly true of lower-income children whose parents emphasize survival skills primarily rather than conformity, docility and quiet manners which is more typical of middle-class childrearing where upward mobility is sought.

Black children are described as entering school for the first time with excitement and enthusiasm. However, the school then crushes the freedom and creativity of the children who cannot channel their energy until given permission to release it. Consequently, Black children elicit more punishment and are labeled hyperactive more frequently because of their high motoric activity.

Morgan believes that Black mothers often ignore their children's motoric precocity and do not seek to extend it because development in that area might interfere with the child's ability to be integrated into the school system of white low motor expectations. This situation, he maintains, is detrimental to the natural learning styles of Black children. The school turns into a minature battleground as the school reacts punitively to the Black child's natural release of motor energy.

Some Black children, Morgan states, are able to quell their motor responses. Those who are not able to are usually in the lower-income levels and are labeled disruptive children, prescribed medication, placed in "problem" classes where cognitive expectations are low ar are suspended from school where they are ignored.

Morgan states that in California in 1976, 25% of the children were classified as hyperactive. This group includes approximately " two million children who are taking tranqualizers, amphetamines and ritalin-- the latter being a behavior modifying drug." The effects of these drugs taken on a daily basis are not known. The only known fact is that the children are more quiet.

The danger in these practices is that they force Black children to conform to a white cognitive model. It also makes Black mothers more reluctant to support and extend the natural motoric responses of their children. When a mother constantly receives reports of misbehavior at school by older children, she may become more punitive and restricitve of the behavior of young pre-schoolers.

Wade Boykin (1977) suggests that the Black home enviornment provides an abundance of stimulation, intensity and variation. There is a relatively high noise level with televisions on a significant amount of time and constant stereophonic music in the enviornment. There are usually large numbers of people per living space and a number of a variety of activities. This has been analyzed as "over-stimulation' and as creating "conceptual deafness" by some social scientists (Marans and Lourie, 1967; Goldman and Sanders, 1969; Wach, Uygiris and Hunt, 1971). However, Boykin suggests that this Black stimulating home enviornment produces greater psychological and behavioral "verve" in Black children than children possess in a white middle-class setting. Exposure to more constant high and variable stimulation, he argues, has led to a higher chronic activation level. Therefore Black children have an increased behavioral vibrancy and an increased psychological affinity for stimulus change and intensity.

It has been pointed out that schools are rather unstimulating and monotonous places to be (Silberman, 1970; Holt, 1964). Boykin suggests that factors like investigatory exploration, behavioral change and novelty and variability have not been incorporated into the classroom. He suggests further, that the reason white children are more successful at academic tasks than Black children is that they have a greater tolerance for monotony in academic task

presentation formats. They may not perform as well if they were faced with increasing levels of format variation and stimulation or if they were asked to utilize movement more in the learning process. On the other hand, perhaps Black children are not as successful in school because they are relatively intolerant of monotonous, boring tasks and the sterile unstimulating school enviornment.

Boykin concludes that affective stimulation and vervisitc stimulation are necessary for the Black child to be motivated to achieve in an academic setting. He suggests that this is the reason why Black children become turned off by the sterile, boring school enviornment and seek other areas for achievement and expression. As quoted earlier, he suggests that "perhaps we can facilitate the academic/task performance of the Black child if we can increase the 'soulfulness' of the academic task setting."

Speech

Ann Piestrup (1973) conducted a study wherein she identified six techniques of 1st grade reading instruction that were utilized with children who speak a Black dialect. She found that the children had the highest proficiency when they were taught using the "Black Artful" approach. These children were taught by a Black teacher who was comfortable using the dialect with the children. She also spoke rhythmically, varied her intonation and engaged in verbal interplay with the children. This teacher combined a high degree of verbal rapport with high involvement with the lesson.

This study is compatible with the observation by Virginia Young (1970) who described a "contest" style of speech between Black mothers and children in which they volley rhythmically and the child is encouraged to be assertive and develop an individual style. Young also suggests that there is a distinctive manner by which Black mothers gave direction for household tasks. She suggests that it approximates the call and response pattern found in Black music. (A mother's communication of directions in houshold tasks uses few words, and task for which she has to give instructions are broken down into small units with brief directions for each short task following on completion of the previous one.)

Using rhythm in speech and engaging in verbal interplay by teachers of Black children may connect culturally with Black children who interact rhythmically with their mothers at home.

Sarah Michaels (1980) conducted an ethnographical study of sharing time in a first grade classroom with one-half Black and one-half white children. She emphasizes that the oral discourse skills of children are important precursers to their literary skills. She found a significant difference between the oral presentation styles of the Black and white children. The white children utilized a style that she calls topic-centered. This style was very compatible with the teacher's notion of a good sharing episode. The discourse of these white upper middle-class children tended to be tightly organized and centering on a single topic or series of closely related topics.

In contrast to the topic centered style, the lower income Black children, and particularly the Black girls, were far more likely to use what she calls a "topic-chaining" style, that is loosely structered talk which moved fluidly from topic to topic, dealing primarily with accounts of personal relations. It was difficult for the teacher to follow the theme of the stories because she expected the narrative to focus on a single topic. These sharing turns gave the impression of having no beginning, middle or end and hence no point at all. The result was that the Black children seemed to "ramble on" about a series of commonplace occurrences.

With the white children who used topic-centered style, the teacher was highly successful at picking up on the child's topic and expanding on it through her questions and comments. Her questions generally stimulated more elaborated focused talk on the same topic.

With many of the Black children, on the other hand, the teacher seemed to have difficulty identifying the topic and understanding where the talk was going. Therefore,her questions were often mistimed, stopping the child in the middle of a thought. Also, her questions were often inappropriate and seemed to throw the child off balance, interrupting his or her train of thought.

The teacher made several attempts to "teach" the children to select and stick with one topic. However, these attempts were confusing to the children. Her first strategy was to emphasize the notion of "importance". She stated that appropriate topics for sharing were events that were "really, really very important and sort of different". However, the children still had difficulty with this notion.

Later in the year, the teacher tried emphasizing a new sharing principle which was that the children should tell about only one thing. However, the Black children still encountered difficulty in conforming to the topic-centered style.

Michaels noted that this narrative style is the same one identified in informal home conversations between selected children and their mothers, as well as in conversations among peers outside the classroom. This observation supports previous research that suggests a conversational style that is a feature of Black culture.

Additionally, Michaels observed a Black instructional aide in the classroom who led sharing time on occasion. Even though the aide was in general a less skilled teacher of reading and math than the regular teacher, during the sharing session she led, she was better able to pick up on the children's narrative intentions, ask them appropriate questions, and help them round out and organize their narrative accounts.

The problems the teacher had with the Black children seemed to stem from a cultural mismatch between the teacher and child. Such mismatches over time resulted in the white children having more of an opportunity to participate in sharing time, receiving more practice and feeling better about their oral exchanges with the teacher. In as much as sharing time develops skills which are useful when children begin to write topic-centered prose, this ethnic group difference in discourse style could lead to serious educational problems.

Speech and the Black Migrant Child

Laura Lein (1975) conducted a study of the speech behavior and linguistic styles of Black migrant children. She found an emphasis upon spontaneity and general participation. In the home, conversations in migrant camps are occasionally slow moving but are amost always open to general participation.

> Children talk with adults, play verbal games with them, and argue with them, although usually in joking terms. Speech interaction at school often involves long monologues with limited participation by others.

Even in church there is an emphasis upon spontaneity and general participation. There is call and response between the preacher and the congregation. Verbal interchanges such as "amen", "take your time", "tell the story", are not regarded as interruptions but as encouragement. In fact, the minister will elicit such verbal evidence of attention and support by cajoling the congregation. "You don't want to hear about that," to which the congregation will

respond that he should "tell it like it is." An individual can spontaneously begin a song or extend a song as well as give a testimony during the service. Lein suggests that:

> At work, at church, and at home, success is valued by migrants but competitive success is not as important as generous participation. The church, the extended family organization of the migrant camp, and the family organization of the work crew all emphasize cooperation rather than competition.
>
> Children who go to school from the migrant camps are faced with important contradictions between home and school. The traditional classroom does not emphasize the qualities of spontaneity, participation, and independence from adults which mark children of migrant camps. Many activities in school are not open to general and spontaneous participation. For instance, teacher monologues or presentations to the class are not meant to be interrupted.

The first category Lein calculated was speech frequency. She observed 13 migrant children in four settings: home with parents present; home with adults absent; school, supervised by the teacher; and school unsupervised by the teacher. She found that migrant children speak less in the supervised classroom than in any other setting. In the classroom they speak considerably less than do students considered able by the teachers. There is also a difference between the home and school in what Lein calls symmetry. That is the extent to which both speakers talk about the same amount. Teachers in the classroom speak much more frequently than does anyone in any of the other settings. Migrant parents in the home speak only a comparatively small amount more than do the children in their presence. Migrant children speak most in groups of peers. They speak most in settings where everyone talks about the same amount.

The second category was speech complexity. In analysing one student's speech, she found that the complexity varied from setting to setting. In discussion with his peers, the student was most organized. He used complex sentences, provided elaborate evidence in support of his statements, and spoke to the point. At home with his brothers and sisters, he paid close attention to argument and responded appropriately. In the observation with his parents present, his speech was more compressed possibly because they were watching television. However, he still used a number of complex sentences. In contrast, his speech in the supervised classroom was almost mono-syllabic, when he spoke at all.

Lein's general findings regarding speech complexity were that the children spoke their longest utterances among their siblings and cousins when

they were unsupervised by adults. They used their simplest speech for the classroom in the presence of teachers. They were more prone to use complex language in the presence of parents than teachers. In general, the settings where migrant children spoke the least, they spoke most simply.

Lein suggested some reasons for the quantity and quality of migrant children's participation in the classroom. One reason is fear and misinterpretation of speech. She suggests that the interaction between white teachers and Black students, particularly Black adolescents, in public school classrooms is peculiar in many ways. One of these is that teachers, in the position of authority in the classrooms frequently fear their students. When teachers are afraid they may misinterpret statements in a way that reinforces their fear. Lein observed that the migrant children tease their parents and older relatives and engage them in playful argument, but there are few attempts at verbal combat or pressure. Teachers relatively unacquainted with this stylistic game-playing react as if the children were seriously challenging their authority.

To understand how the school is structured to prevent children from participating, Lein contrasted the behavior expected at church with the behavior expected at school. The church was selected because it was a setting in which similar demands were made on the children but to which they respond differently. The church services are lenghty (three to four hours) but almost all migrant children behave well in church by the standards of parents and other church members:

> However, there are at least two differences between appropriate behavior at church and at school. At school, except in the kindergarten and first grade, students are expected to remain in their seats, moving about the room only at the direction of their teachers. Such sanctioned movements are relatively infrequent. In church, children are expected to spend most of the time in their seats, but the movements demanded by participating in the church service involve frequent standing and walking around. As a church service proceeds, people who "have the spirit" shout and move around the room. In addition to this scheduled movement, it is acceptable behavior for children to get up at will to go to the bathroom, to change seats, and to quiet and fondle children younger than themselves . . . Both more regulated, scheduled movement and more spontaneous movement are acceptable in church than in the school classroom.

Lein also notes that there is a difference in the freedom to verbalize at church and at school. At church there are a number bf scheduled events for verbal participation by the congregation such as singing, responsive readings, testimonies, voting to accept new members and so forth. In addition, as noted

before, there is extensive call and response between the congregation and the speakers. Hence, there is continual verbalizing.

> This is in contrast to the classroom where attention is more usually marked by silence or by questions and remarks at relatively long intervals. Acceptable indicators of attention and appropriate participation by the child are different in school and in church. And the perogatives of the children are different.

Lein observed that migrant children usually only display their speech skills in settings in which they speak with some regularity. She suggests that at school participation and skill demonstration are frequently silent activities.

> Eye contact rather than verbal contribution is a sign of attention and participation. Demonstrations of ability are usually in the form of individual trials of new skills before the teacher.

This study points out a number of incompatibilities between the culture of the school and the culture of the home. Lein concludes that teachers need to listen to students speak in contexts where they exhibit their best speech skills.

> Demanding examples of good speech from students in tests or in the usual classroom situations is not necessarily an effective way of finding out what students know. Listening to exchanges between peers and peer evaluations of such exchanges is an important part of discovering how children speak. Also, it is a reasonable mechanism for learning how children interpret and react to speech. Teaching teachers the skills of anthropological observation and analysis may be one helpful way of enlarging their understanding of what is happening in the classroom.

Public Policy and the Black Migrant Child

Manual Reyes (1978) outlines the following needs of migrant children in education:

1. The need to compensate for inadequate living conditions.
2. The need to compensate for a frequently interrupted and itinerate education.
3. The need to overcome health and nutritional defects which interfere with the educational process.
4. The need for others to know, understand and appreciate the nature of their problem.
5. The need to identify with successful role models who are similar to themselves in background, culture and language.
6. The need for motivation to complete a high school education.
7. The need for personal, vocational and family guidance.
8. The need to communicate.
9. The need for common experiences.
10. The need for relevant opportunities.
11. The need to be recognized for their potential and creativity.
12. The need for assistance from the community at large.

There are several needs of Black children that are distinctive and several they share to varying degrees with other Black children. One of their distinctive

needs is a recognition and alleviation of the tension they face between urban and rural life and the problem that poses in adjusting to school and schoolmates. Even though Afro-American culture in the United States has a southern rural base, and that fosters continuities among Blacks throughout the country, urban living produces a more aggressive and distinctively stylistic expression of that culture that can be disconcerting to newcomers. So, attention should be given to the social adjustments demanded of Black migrant children.

Edgar Easley (1978) reports that often it is thought that rural migrants possess few skills and are in need of massive doses of education. Often the coping and survival skills they possess are ignored. This tension is one of lack of assessment and appreciation of student skills and lack of ability to translate existing skills to a new setting.

Easley suggests four major areas in which this tension can be reduced: curriculum, counseling, social interaction and support services.

In the area of curriculum a good deal of the content in reading and computational skills can be adapted to circumstances familiar to the student. "It is an evident statement that one moves from the known to the unknown in terms of examples, practices and considerations."

In the area of counseling, there is a need to present to the Black students expanded occupational opportunities. Robert Hill (1972) identified a strong motivation to achieve as a strength of Black families. However, Kuvleaky and Ohlendorf (1966) reported that urban Blacks have high occupational goals and strong desires to reach those goals but such a high motivation is not present to the same extent among rural Blacks.

A study conducted by Kuvleaky in 1971 suggests that Black children need an oportunity to establish an identification with successful role models from their ethnic backgrounds. He reported that both urban abd rural Black male youths adopted role models from "glamour" figures such as entertainers and athletes. Rural Black female youths also chose "glamour' figures such as Diana Ross. But urban Black female youths chose teachers as role models. Additionally, in all four groups significant family persons were role models. This selection of glamour figures probably comes from the preoccupation of the media (even the Black media) with the exploits of entertainers and athletes. Since there is such a paucity of Black professionals that Black children routinely encounter, there are not enough role models to encourage upward

mobility. If this is the case for Blacks, it is clear that the situation is aggravated for Black migrant workers.

Another problem in achieving high aspirations by Blacks is the lack of information regarding the mechanisms for achieving success. When one is the child of migrant workers and most of one's extended network of relatives are engaged in that occupation, one is at a severe disadvantage in trying to deviate from the known path to pursue a different occupational goal. Members of the dominant society have numerous exposures and opportunities that are taken for granted. They have family members who not only serve as role models, but who also understand the choices sacrifices and support systems that are needed in order to achieve success.

It is important to understand the bonds of social interaction within a community and to utilize these networks in introducing new programs and in facilitating social assimilation for migrant children. Often churches, jobs and clubs are composed of persons who earlier migrated from the same area. Understanding the role of the church as a social institution may assist in bridging the gap between migrant "newcomers', urban residents and institutions. This social interaction network can be useful in providing information about support services that are available to migrants.

In instances where Black people have been reticient to avail themselves to social services, it has been recommended that those agencies study institutions in the Black community, such as the church and adopt those features that seem to be effective.

Black migrant children would benefit from self-image improvement. They (as with other Black children) should be involed in cross-cultural education about events in Black history and contributions made to society by persons of different ethnic backgrounds.

Another important area that is of educational importance is the area of assessment. A study by Oxford in 1977 suggested that norm-referenced tests are not as effective in evaluating migrant students as are criterion-referenced tests because of the following factors:

1. underrepresentation of disadvantaged and minority students in the test development and standardization processes;
2. underrepresentation of low-difficulty test items, resulting in test insensitivity to growth of low-achieving students over time;
3. an inadequate test floor for disadvantaged and minority students;
4. mismatches between test content and project objectives;
5. test construction which is not based on a representative sample of

expected learning behaviors; and
6. misinterpretation of grade equivalent scores in reporting results.

Oxford suggests that criterion-referenced tests might alleviate some of these problems, provide more flexibility in the timing in administering the tests and offer more explicit information than norm-referenced tests about what a student can or cannot do relative to specific objectives or skills.

A related issue to testing is the recognition of potential and creativity within the context of Black migrant culture. This is a need of Black children in general. There is an inadequate definition of giftedness as it is expressed in their culture.

Health and Nutritional Needs

There are health and nutritional problems that migrant children share with other Black children. Some scholars (Pasamanick and Knobloch, 1958, 1966; Kawi and Pasamanick, 1959; drillian, 1964) suggest that some difficulty some Black children experience in academic tasks can be explained by minimal brain damage associated with premature birth. Since the rate of prematurity is high among low income Blacks, it is possible that many cases of low achievement could be caused by organic disorders. This seems to be more critical for Black male children who seem more vulnerable to organic disorders than girls.

Poor nutrition seems to be an important factor that influences attentiveness and academic tasks and school achievement. It has been suggested (Birch and Gussow, 1970) that while Black children are not necessarily malnutritioned, they may be less well-nourished than white children. Children who are poorly nourished or under-nourished are less attentive to school tasks and more distracted by their hunger sensations.

According to the Interstate Migrant Education Task Force on Migrant Health the major obstacles to administering a total health care system to migrant families are: 1) unavailability of accurate information pertaining to migrant health and 2) inadequate appropriations. Some of the major findings of the Task Force were:

1. Health needs of migrants in all service areas, including preventive education, nutrition, prenatal care, dental checkups, treatment and emergency care are critical.
2. Services to the handicapped children and other children with special needs are largely unavailable.
3. A large percentage of the health problems identified among migrant families is attributable to unsanitary and unsafe working conditions.

4. Many migrant families are excluded from services that are available because of a tangle of residency requirements and annual income eligibility requirements.

The Task Force makes several recommendations on the basis of these findings. Essentially they are:

1. More comprehensive legislation at the national level.
2. Better planning for the delivery of health services.
3. More research on the basic health needs of migrant children. More research on the needs of migrant children who are handicapped, gifted, abused and neglected.
4. More involvement of the agricultural and fishing industries in the health and welfare of migrant workers and their families.

Conclusion

There is need for more basic ethnographical research on the culture of Black migrant children. It is easier to eliminate the weaknesses they experience in obtaining upward mobility in mainstream society by building upon their strengths and abilities. When more is known and understood about their religious orientation, the way in which their extended family functions, these networks can be utilized in beginning to solve the problems they face.

Too often Americans have a "wonder drug" approach to social problems. There is a need for a greater sensitivity toward basic research on the development of Black children before programs are designed. Too many programs have been assembled overnight, imposed on communities and found ineffective ten years later. We need to engage in basic research as a first step in program development. I am reminded of the African proverb that says: "To move slowly is sometimes more advantageous than to go speedily." It is clear that we need action, but it is equally clear that we need informed social policy.

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